

Saturday, November 5, 2011
9:41 AM

\C-II\Crises & Decision Theory

Crisis: (Chinese characters, cited by Nixon): “Danger and Opportunity.”
Rahm Emmanuel: never waste a crisis.

An impending danger—that can still be averted—or even, turned to advantage. (The need to avert the danger, and the justification for taking unusual or extreme measures to do so, perhaps breaking norms or laws or constraints, the mobilization of a group behind one’s leadership to do so, may enable one to achieve goals otherwise or earlier unattainable).

But I studied political crises (specifically, ones involving a danger or threat of nuclear war).

Distinguish these from: impending natural disasters, like an ongoing or impending flood, floodwaters rising or a dike breaking; drought, water shortage; approach of hurricane; tsunami; volcano; epidemic.

Little dimension of anger, humiliation, betrayal, prior deception, ascendancy of a rival, loss of status, subordination, shame (unless for exposure of lack of proper preparation or caretaking: Katrina, Gulf oil spill).

All the above are likely to be present in a political crisis, involving imminent losses or defeats caused by a rival or adversary, powerful human agents, or by exposure of secrets: which can still be averted or ameliorated (or turned to advantage: 9-11—Iraq invasion, suspension of Constitution; or “provocations”—Tonkin Gulf,

My impression at the time of C-II: that it was entirely a provocation by SU, unprovoked by US (unless, by my Gilpatric speech! And Ann Arbor, etc. WHY WAS THERE THAT SERIES OF ‘FIRST-STRIKE’ DECLARATIONS BY THE ADMINISTRATION?! The intended target, as far as I knew about Athens (hence Ann Arbor) was de Gaulle, not Khrushchev (unless, to change SU plans to avoid cities: but they would have had to believe that city-avoidance was not only intended but feasible. **And compare JFK’s and SAC’s inclination to disperse B-52s to city-airports, in the call of that same year, in C-II! And N in 1969!!! A total contradiction of “no cities” doctrine! MAD indeed! Might SU have done the same?!! As we were giving the example!_**

Why did I **think** K had done this? Or hsr? What was the urgency? Other than Berlin.

I found in my crisis study (Skybolt, Suez, Cuba) a strong component of leader’s anger, at feelings of humiliation and betrayal and being lied to, made a fool of, deceived, kept from secrets (excluded from secret knowledge, secret circle: see knowledge of taping,

Haldeman but not Ehrlichman. Who knew of JFK's taping? (O'Donnell? RFK?) LBJ's??)

Note: **not all secrets, by any means, are guilty secrets.** Info is kept secret, in the first instance, to gain advantage, to lessen vulnerability, to defend. None of these may be illegitimate or embarrassing if revealed. Particularly secret knowledge is knowledge of another's—a rival or ally or subordinate's—secrets, including their knowledge of your own secrets and the process by which each of you tries to penetrate the secrets of the other. Later revelation may: make it harder to keep or penetrate secrets in future; may “cast a new light” on your own performance earlier, your aims, your relationships, lead to new interpretations (good or bad, dangerous or not).

In particular, “good” advice or even actions may need above all to be kept secret, if it would appear “dovish,” weak, unmanly: or simply, controversial, attracting blame or reproach from some; even if it appears to the actor (realistically) as right, good, best, effective. Doves on Vietnam; readiness to make concessions on Cuba. (Actual concession; and especially, JFK's readiness to go further).

There are differences between what is right to do, what is legal, what is moral: and between what you have done or intended to do, and what others think about it, or what you have said about it).

(Can something be “immoral” and still, in the circumstances, the right or best thing to do, even, obligatory? In that case, is it still “immoral” or “evil” or “wrong” in those circumstances? Decision theorist tends to say that virtually nothing (he can imagine) is the wrong thing to do, evil or immoral per se, i.e. in all imaginable circumstances. Nothing is excluded as an “option” in extraordinary circumstances: i.e. “crises.” That's an incentive to regard a situation as a “crisis,” threatening the imminence of a “greater evil, a great danger (not only to oneself)” when one wants “permission” to do something ordinarily regarded as evil, or illegal, or immoral.

K/T: (my theory of catastrophes): When you see someone taking what appears to be a wildly disproportionate risk: **guess** (heuristically) that they see as their only alternative a “sure thing,” a certainty, of imminent personal (and also, perhaps, team) loss/defeat/humiliation, which may be averted by the risky gamble. Heuristically: look for this.

If the risky gamble involves violence to others, guess also that: 1) there is an element of anger, humiliation, prior to the choice, and (2) a desire for revenge or “evening the score”: a shift of “utilities”—including vN-M utilities, but also an actual preference for causing pain or humiliation or loss to another (even at a price to oneself); along with (3) a fear of **impending further humiliation and loss**, which may be averted (or at least, compensated for or avenged) by the violence (which may be to scapegoats!)

[Do economists or decision theorists (DTs) ever consider the “altered state” of emotions, fear, jealousy, revenge, humiliation, anger, altering one’s utilities or preferences for the well-being or emotional state of **others**?]

(4) Also: guess that the risk may not seem so disproportionate to the actor (especially in their current emotional state) as it does to observers: a) the possible “worst outcome” (social disaster, to observers) seems to the actor little worse than the personal “disaster” that is otherwise certain. Thus, to Castro and other Cubans, occupation, or the death by conventional bombing of “millions” of Cubans (perhaps not exaggerated, over a long time of guerrilla warfare) was not (much) worse than their annihilation by “limited” nuclear warfare, or even the destruction of most of the world by a Soviet or US preemptive attack. *Patria o muerte!* (*Muerte of all!*) Readiness of Cubans to die to the last man (woman and child: literally! *Masada!*)

(See Saddam and his Doomsday Machine! The Dead Hand. NATO! Haig on NFU. NATO plans not only as a threat (or K’s bluffs! In Suez or Berlin or C-I) but as something that might actually be implemented. What could be more “nihilistic”?! Literally, “better dead than Red.” See rhetoric of Power, Russell, LeMay: two Americans, one Russian; two nuclear weapons left, one Soviet. **(Only relative payoffs count; strictly zero-sum.**

The Masada complex (see Samson Option) in the nuclear era!

Samson option: Israel, France, South Africa. Aum Shinrykyo. Castro in C-II!

See the implications of letting a given country have its own nuclear weapons: more willing to use them to “defend” its own territory, or *avenge* invasion, than any ally. Thus, RFK considers giving them to Germany in C-II as response to K putting them in Cuba. SU considers giving them to Cuba. France’s Force de Frappe (smaller, but more sure to be used than American’s) (and usable against Germany).

5) the risk may appear to the actor to be smaller than it appears to observers (though it may not!). Thus, K thought the missiles would not be discovered until they were fully operational, “too late to be attacked”. (And he almost made it! He would have, if 1) he had used his SAMs for **the only thing they were good for**: preventing U-2 surveillance! (as McCone expected). A mystery, why he didn’t! or 2) he had announced their readiness, with warheads (perhaps bluffing: though that wasn’t necessary), when they were, instead of keeping this secret; or 3) announced the presence of tac nucs with warheads, and delegation!;

and K overestimated JFK’s willingness to accept a *fait accompli* (was this an overestimate, if he had actually presented him with a *fait accompli* rather than a crisis, s a result of a *Fait Malaccompli*? K underestimated the pressure on JFK to **act boldly and violently if there was still a chance to prevent the missiles becoming operational**. (After all, the very purpose of the secrecy in transit was to prevent a blockade if they were announced openly. So why not worry about a blockade or worse, an air attack, if they were discovered before they were operational? Especially (1) during an election

campaign, in which the Republicans were pressing for an invasion precisely because of what the Soviets **were** doing openly (*a mystery: the Soviets don't seem to have considered the risk that their own open actions, or discovered actions, would increase the likelihood and imminence of an invasion; perhaps because they wrongly regarded an invasion as "inevitable" without their actions, so that their actions would not increase that likelihood (it was a choice between a certainty and a possible avoidance).*

And (2) especially after JFK had made specific warnings of grave consequences if they deployed land-based missiles: thus not only warning of a response, but committing himself to it, politically (not only a private warning, which he also made). Another **mystery**: How come no Soviet seems to have urged K to **reconsider** and reject/withdraw the MRBMs (rather than the tac nucs: which could not only have been sent, even openly, and/or concealed effectively, as they were, and then announced) after the JFK warnings and commitments? Why didn't they reconsider that part of the program when JFK's officials made it necessary to lie to them, by pressing them and warning on this very point? (Check dates of arrival in Cuba: **was it really too late to draw back?** Meaning what?)

Why, instead, did K simply speed up the process, on hearing these warnings? He did **not** have to give up his aid to Cuba, his deterrence of US attack; he just had to give up the MRBM component of this, which (like the Turkish missiles) was not only a deterrent but a lightning rod, a nuclear target and a target for preemption (first-strike weapons, not second-strike!)

They were moving toward openly humiliating JFK (by his mistaken predictions and assurances, at least, if not by his inaction, which they hoped for) just before an election! ("How could he do this to me?" "Why?") (Like Ike and British in Suez). Didn't this worry them? Didn't they foresee a strong reaction? (Didn't they understand my crisis pattern? Did K have contempt for JFK, and what he would accept, or not?) Did they consider it at all?

(Was the desire for revenge a factor: for Gilpatric, for backing down on his own threats, for the JFK and McN threats of FS, for the Turkish IRBMs? Had he complained about these, or reproached JFK, in the private correspondence earlier?

HAD HE EXPRESSED HIS FEARS, ANGER, EXPECTATIONS ABOUT AN AMERICAN INVASION OF CUBA, WITH EVIDENCE (E.G. OF MONGOOSE, EXERCISES), AND HIS CONCERN ABOUT THIS, EITHER PUBLICLY OR PRIVATELY TO JFK? IF NOT, WHY NOT? HAD CASTRO?

Madoff, Ponzi schemes; counting on dereliction of inspectors, relations with them;

Sub-prime securitization: likewise.

Swaps, etc.: too big to fail. Corzine: governments would not be allowed to default. (True: but his own creditors didn't have equal confidence).

On risk: contrary to most scholars, K **could** have gotten away with it, and it is a mystery why he didn't use tactics he had in his minds (ignored by most analysts: of revealing the operational status of all missiles with warheads, perhaps even delegation: as early as October 14—when Soviets in Cuba knew they had been detected—or between 14-20, or after 23 (when all warheads had arrived). (When did first warheads arrive? I think Oct. 1. Then did MRBMs arrive? COuldn't they have been returned, just like IRBMs?) Didn't K realize that 1) the MRBMs were the particular danger, the provocation to strong US reaction, after the Sept. 4 and Sept. 13 warnings? And (2) that they were not **necessary** to thoroughly sufficient deterrence? (Granted, deterrence was not his only objective; he wanted to even the balance, and to achieve revenge ("give them a taste of their own Turkish medicine")

Note: **SU collaborated with the US on keeping the preparations for US invasion, and Mongoose, secret!** (Just as SU had done the same, with respect to U-2 incursions in SU, before Gary Powers. But then, when they had a SAM, they used it!) Did they not want to reveal their sources? But exercises were not secret! (How, and how much, did they know about assassination attempts?)

Likewise, US feared we were going to lose South Vietnam! Hardly a secret. And feared for Berlin: not a secret. Our threats and actions were overt. Why didn't K make the SU commitment to Cuba overt, an agreement, as Castro wanted and urged? (Another mystery).

These "mysteries" are not just "known unknowns," things I would like to know, could know, and don't (yet) know. It is **hard to imagine** motives, aims, expectations, considerations, that would "make sense" of this behavior for Khrushchev.

11:12 AM (2000 words in 90 minutes; 1320/hr)

Difference between my K/T theory of gambling with catastrophe; and my crisis theory, faits malaccomplis. Latter explains why a "crisis" arises: why one party acts more aggressively, more "angrily," than the other had anticipated, creating a crisis for that other (because they had created a crisis for the first, rather than achieving the fait accompli they had planned). But the angry response need not be violent (Ike demanding stop to Suez invasion, threatening not to support the pound), or dangerous to the actor (Skybolt). (In C-II, the blockade was dangerous, though not initially violent).

(9-11 had the potential of a great humiliation for Bush: his failure to foresee or forestall it (so egregious as to give rise to strong suspicions he had actually planned or desired it). This seems rarely to be considered: given that he exploited it so effectively. (More of an opportunity than a danger; yet the danger was real, if there had been investigation; if the Democrats hadn't been so coopted into rallying round the leader, in a time of apparent danger at home).

Note the secrets of Cuba, which McGeorge Bundy didn't plan to expose to me (but may have feared that I would find out):

1. Mongoose (like 34A in VN, just two years later)
2. Assassination plans
3. Use of Mafia
4. Invasion plans
5. JFK readiness to concede public trade (McGeorge didn't know himself)
6. JFK secret covert trade
7. Secret channel with Soviets (Bolshakov; letters; RFK/Dobrynin (I did find out)
8. PSALM; and hsr study in August
9. Ultimatum(s)
10. First four above: US provocation of SU move, SU probable aims; implied illegitimacy of US response (and deception of public)
11. Strength of disagreement between JCS and JFK and frustration of JCS/CIA (also in Vietnam; possibly a factor in JFK death a year before my study, along with frustration of Cuban émigrés)
12. JFK as “dove” (along with Stevenson, thrown to wolves by JFK)

(Then there were the secrets on the Soviet side, and the “accidents” and unauthorized actions on the US side, not known to Bundy—or to the other inside students of the crisis in the US: Wainstein, Southard, Sieverts, other CIA. I inferred one of the Soviet secrets: that K hadn't ordered the U-2 shutdown. (And lack of control of Cuban AA. How did I get that?)

PSALM: Did that indicate that if the U-2 discovery had been much closer to the election—say, Oct. 30-Nov. 5—JFK meant to keep it secret through the election, and would have done so? Or that K might have expected this (as I guessed in my study) (just as K had kept U-2 overflights secret so long as he couldn't do anything about them). I supposed in my study that the SU assurances that “We won't do anything to embarrass you before the election” meant much the same as Israel's assurances, “We won't be the first to introduce nuclear weapons into the Middle East”: namely, we won't **announce**

them, force you to recognize the situation and respond to it. We'll keep the secret, for now, if you do.

But JFK, even with PSALM, couldn't keep that secret for three weeks, especially with the JCS all primed to go and the Republicans making it a major issue. K seems simply to have been stupid—wishful?—in believing either that the US would not see the missiles before November or that JFK would not react if he saw them weeks before the election. (But if the SAM had shot down the U-2 on October 14...)

Yet all the Russians went along with it. What did they think would happen? Did none of them foresee catastrophe?! Possible WWII? Or at best, great humiliation? Which of them thought JFK would accept this humiliation?

11/5/11 1:06 PM

Notes on last half of Bernstein, Reconsidering the Cuban Missile Crisis: Turkey...in Nathan, C-II Revisited

(Look up hsr study on SU missiles in Cuba, August 23 -62)

emphasis is entirely on forces which might launch an attack on the US. (NOT on tac nucs, or troops)

How could we say we couldn't "tolerate" these, given Turkey? (If Turkish missiles had not been removed; and for that matter, given that they had been installed—in 1962!—in the first place!)

Note that possibility of ordering attack on Cuba or invasion is being considered on August 23; clearly a precursor to Oct. 1-2 orders to accelerate plans. "We had no intention..." = LBJ apologists saying later, "We had no intention of attacking NVN in 1964..." (No final order or date had been given). (LBJ could still reject it).

Oct. 10: already a staff memo contrasting SU missiles in Cuba and Turkish missiles; probably stimulated by the intelligence on SU missiles that **led** to the Oct. 14 flight. (Thus, my access to the NRO files—Ideal—revealed that the Oct. 14 flight was preceded by intelligence that seemed solid, contrary to McGeorge Bundy's statement on Meet the Press (?) that same Sunday Oct. 14 about lack of evidence. On Oct. 1, McN (and Nitze?) gets a briefing by DIA claiming that there was evidence of missiles (convincing Nitze? To me. Although Elizabeth Cohn, 323, says Col. Wright claims this was just a hypothesis, a theory). Plans are stepped up that very day and next. (Did warheads arrive on Oct. 1, however?)

McN's rationale for updating plans for attack (**from me!**) includes (Hershberg255) SU offensive missiles, Oct. 2, to be complete by Oct. 20. (That's why blockade was feasible, so fast; or attack, invasion). Let's assume that JFK and RFK (given assurances from Bolshakov?) were surprised and outraged and (politically) scared (Keating will be next president) on Oct. 16 (Nitze and Rusk were not!). It was **not** because it had seemed unimaginable or extremely unlikely earlier (especially to those unaware of Bolshakov assurances) to administration officials other than McCone; **or** that they had ignored the possibility, failed utterly to plan for it (plans were undertaken very urgently, though secretly: secrecy presumably to keep from seeming to confirm Republican charges, and to be able to surprise the Soviets or Cubans (though see exercises), and to be ready to use them for other reasons of opportunity or urgency, even in the absence of missiles); **or** that they lacked all evidence of the possibility (see August 23 NSAM-181).

September 14 (day after second JFK warning) (p. 253) JFK, MCN, JCS discussed air attack; 27 Sept Air Force approved plans for detailed attack, setting target date of 20 Oct. for completion of preparations. Same target date that McN set on Oct. 1! [Imagine uncovering directives and planning like this for attack on Afghanistan—or Iraq—prior to

9-11!] (Actually, there were comparable warnings, internally, even from CIA: August 2001! But were there military preparations like this?)

JFK was particularly interested in details of attack on SAMs. So he didn't necessarily expect personally to find missiles, though the possibility was explicit. But **readiness** to attack was a presidential and SecDef intention: and by October 20, before election. (Not necessarily for advantage in election, but to avoid a defeat that might have come to loom large between late September and November 6. When did Keating make specific charge missiles were there? (Apparently from Cuban émigrés).

Compare the planning throughout 1964 for widening the war in Vietnam!
Or throughout 2002 for attack on Iraq (with discussion starting a year before that).

But then, when the contingency arrived—against which JFK had warned “grave consequences”—JFK did NOT attack or invade (though he did start blockade: seemingly “too late,” after missiles had, indeed, arrived (though it was not certain that warheads had). A threat that he might follow this with air attack: though he told Galbraith that “he never had any intention of attacking.” (Douglas) Just as LBJ “never had any intention” of taking actions wanted by the JCS that were likely to bring in the Chinese.

That doesn't mean he had no intention of invading under any circumstances **before** he learned that missiles had arrived and might be operational! (Nor that he had definitely decided to do so). The blockade constituted a threat (bluff) that he might do so; though K was at first relieved, that it wasn't an attack. But K came to worry that JFK would attack...

My guess, as of last night: with the blockade, taking risks and acting illegally, potentially violently (like a “good doctor”: 1964 Bundy), he was showing toughness, prior to negotiating a deal that would otherwise be subject to charge of weakness, appeasement. “Shooting his way out of the saloon”: WPB proposal in 1964, McNamara intent (?) in starting RT in 1965. Nixon with Christmas bombing of Hanoi, prior to Paris Accord in 1973. Countering charge of weakness, and lack of will to shoot to gain victory; laying foundation for claim that the resulting deal was “the best that could have been achieved,” and is the product of adversary's fear and hurt, not one's own weakness and fear. JFK to Stevenson, and RFK to Stevenson: make deal after blockade, not before or simultaneously. (Bernstein, 74) Like Truman and Byrnes: accept emperor after Hiroshima, not before.

Moreover, the shooting not only covers up a willingness to accept terms that some will say are not good enough; it can actually improve the terms somewhat. JFK had to worry that the final deal might call for getting out of Turkey altogether, or out of Italy and UK as well. (It could certainly have called for more guarantees to Cuba, as Castro demanded). **Mystery: Why K did take out tac nucs, without being asked; they weren't offensive, they could deter invasion, JFK didn't ask for it, because he didn't even know they were there (another mystery).**

Just as McN hoped, after RT commenced, for better terms than otherwise (actually, unattainable: de facto partition of SVN, just as Nixon hoped later). WPB: shoot/attack then call for negotiations. McN: No, bomb and let them call for negotiations.

Bernstein 75: the night of Oct. 22, McN was asked in backgrounder (see August 4, 1965) to respond to claim (by who?) that SU was just doing what we had done in Turkey, putting missiles close to territory. McN: no similarity. Turkey was threatened by SU (what?!) Cuba “was not under the threat of nuclear attack, or **attack from this country.**” Jesus! Shameless! And he was still saying that, in 1963 and in 1987, 1992 (though by then he was admitting that it was “reasonable” for Cuba to imagine that it was. Yeah.)

77. Supposedly, the CIA and Admin “assumed the worst” and “presumed” that warheads were in Cuba. Really? Then how could they really be preparing for attack or invasion?! (Of course, they didn’t know of FROGs/FKRs with warheads). Or Luna warheads.